

Interview H0235: Surkhang Wangchen Gelek [tib. zur khang dbang chen dge legs], (USA, 1967) : Part No. 4 of 7

The interviewee was one of the most important Tibetan government officials in modern Tibetan history. He served as a Kashag or Cabinet Minister (Kalön) from 1943-1959. On this tape he continues to discuss the history of Lungshar including his arrest and sentencing.

Q

[Date of interview] 26th of September, the continuation of [Lungshar](#).

A

Then they called [Lungshar](#) to [Tse](#) [the Potala], and when he came to [Tse](#), [answer not finished]

Q

First he went home, right?

A

Yes, he went home for a short time. They thought he wouldn't come and his partners would cause some disturbance. They were very scared, but he stayed for a short time and then went to the back side of [Tse](#). If he came from the front, he would have to walk a lot, but when he came from behind, he could ride his horse right near to [Tse](#). Since Lhalu was located at the north, a long distance from [Tse](#), they sent people to watch there and asked the people there "Has he flee there [north]? If he had, he would have fled to Sera." But he didn't go to Lhalu, and came up to [Tse](#), so then all of them were relaxed (tib. lode [blo bde]) and said that he is coming up.

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Lungshar came with two servants and a [Khamba](#) bodyguard (tib. [apdru](#)) who was said to be very brave and had a gun in the pouch of his [chupa](#) (tib. [amdra](#) [am phrag]). [Lungshar](#) had a friend who was a big [Khamba](#) trader and that man sent this bodyguard who would sacrifice his life for [Lungshar](#). Lungshar's servants also had guns in their chupa's pouch. They dismounted their horses down there, and the [Khamba](#) didn't come up to [Tse](#). But two of his servants accompanied him to [Tse](#). I heard that first they didn't go to Shögaà but went to the Kashag where [Lungshar](#) talked with the Sawangs on other matters. Although the Sawangs knew what was going on, they were very clever and acted as if they were his friends.

Q

On that day, [Trimön](#) was not there, right?

A

Yes. [Trimön](#) had already fled. He had asked the Kashag for leave on that day. People didn't know much about that and some said [Trimön](#) went to Drepung for pilgrimage, but the Regent and those people knew because [Trimön](#) reported to them that he can't stay here because his life is in danger. The Regent and the Kashag discussed this and they had already decided to arrest him [Lungshar] on that day.

Q

Did [Trimön](#) think that his life will be in danger if they couldn't arrest [Lungshar](#)?

A

A. No, he didn't think like that. This was his policy and [using English] propaganda to show that [Lungshar](#) is even making a [Kalön](#) unable to stay there. First, it was to [using English] show that [Lungshar](#) is bad and second, if the monks followed [Lungshar], it would be dangerous because the so called monks do not know the long run policy. When they found somebody who surrendered to them, they say he is mine [tib. kho nga'i mi red] and would feel glad. But it was also not certain that Drepung will [stand on] Trimön's side and Sera will [stand on] Lungshar's side. On the other hand, Trimön's son was a Drepung monk, and the abbots of Drepung was also close to [Trimön](#).

When [Lungshar](#) first came to Shögaà, they told him to wait a little bit because they were little bit busy. So [Lungshar](#) came to the Kashag and talked with the Sawangs on

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other matters and the Sawangs gave him the answers. Just after that, the Sawangs told [Lungshar](#), "we received a photo sent by the Indian Consulate saying that a European went to northern Tibet to spy and he has arrived in England. So what kind of person is he? So [Lungshar](#) went through the motions of looking at the photo and said we can recognize him right away because his eyes are blue. Actually, there was no reason to ask him about this, but they acted like they were friends.

After that, when [Lungshar](#) came to Shögaà, they received a message calling the Sawangs to come to Shögaà so the Sawangs went to Shögaà, and as soon as the Regent, the Silön and the two Sawangs, Chöthar and Nangchungnga, were seated there, [Lungshar](#) was called in to the Shögaà and then the Nendrön went to the Regent and the order was given to the Nendrön that said, "Lungshar is doing a lot of things unrestrained by law. Therefore, right now, you are demoted from all the titles and we are going to arrest you for the time being and shut you up in prison. And regarding this, afterwards, we are gradually going to question your colleagues." (tib. lungshar gyis krims med 'di zhe drag byed kyi 'dug/ de 'dra yin tsang/ de ring lam [sang](#) lung shar khyod rang gi go sa sgang ga gnas dbyungs yin/ khyod rang gnas skabs ring do dam byed kyi yin/ btson la 'jug gi yin/ de tsho'i skor la rogs pa de tshor rjes la ga ler ga ler skad cha 'dri gi yin].

Q

Were there soldiers?

A

No, there was nothing.

Q

Lungshar had a gun, right?

A

Yes, but they were thinking that [Lungshar](#) would not be able make such a disturbance (tib, sa ngi sing ngi [zang ngi zing ngi]) because he had already came to a [using English] government house. When they gave the order and [Lungshar](#) bent his body and then they had to take off his [chupa](#) [uniform]. This would be done by the Treasury Office (the [Tseja](#) Legung [tib. rtse phyag las khungs]). So they said, "call the [Tseja](#). They have to take off Lungshar's [chupa](#)." But the [Tseja](#) didn't come right away and after the order was

passed down, the Nendrön went in the house and [Lungshar](#) was left there. There were 2-3 Shöndrön and two Simgag of the regent. I heard then [Lungshar](#) went outside and they were inattentive (tib. nangwa chung masong [snang ba byung ma song], so then [Lungshar](#) ran out. So when they said [Lungshar](#) went out, the two Simgag couldn't bear the responsibility and ran after him and told [Lungshar](#), "Sir, don't go, Wait a minute." [tib. sku zhabs/ ma phebs dang/ tog tsam sgug dang], but [Lungshar](#) didn't listen to them and went towards the back door [tib. ltag sgo rgyab]. He had descended two stairs of [Tse](#), when they said he is running away. Then the Simgag arrived there. [Lungshar](#) had a gun in his chupa's pouch and Lungshar's servant tried to take out his gun, but [Lungshar](#) told him, "Leave it there! (tib. yug shog [dbyug zhog]).

Then the Simgag went fast and caught [Lungshar](#) and dragged him inside saying, "Sir, this is not allowed. Come in" [tib. sku zhabs/ de 'dra chog gi ma red pa/ yar phebs], and they took him inside. The two servants ran away. The [Khamba](#) also ran away and he was never found. People were saying that on that day if Lungshar's servant had fired a gun, since the Simgag didn't have guns, [Lungshar](#) would have had got through to down there, and if he run away and called his associates, there would have been a big disturbance (tib. sa ngi sing ngi [zang ngi zing ngi]) and probably many people would have been killed. But this didn't happen, and [Lungshar](#) was taken inside. When he was caught, the [Tseja](#) came and took off his [chupa](#) (gown). He was wearing rainbow design boots called jachen [tib. 'ja' chen]) and when they took off his boots, [Lungshar](#) put his hand in his boot and picked up a piece of paper and put it into his mouth.

They said, "He is eating something." There were many people there and when they took the paper out of his mouth, on it was written, "Suppress [Kalön](#) Trimön Norbu Wangyal" [tib. bka' blon khri smon nor bu dbang rgyal nan]. So he had been casting a spell [tib. sngags]. He was making a sorcery curse (tib. te [gya](#) [gtad rgyag] according to the religion for subduing [tib. dbang du 'du] [Trimön](#). When this was discovered, everyone was suspicious and said, "Oh! [Lungshar](#) is very bad." And "He is casting an evil spell" [tib. ngan sgags rgyag]. Then [Lungshar](#) was imprisoned in [Sharchenjog](#) [tib. shar chen lcog] [in the Potala] where the [using English] political prisoners were kept. Many people from the [Tseja](#) office were on guard. I heard that [Lungshar](#) told them, "Oh, this is very dirty, are there scorpions in here?" They replied, "There are no scorpions." Then the clerk [tib. jo lags] called Champa La [tib. byams pa lags] said, "Kungö, this is the prison where Kungö [Künphel](#) La was kept." So [Lungshar](#) laughed.

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At this time, it was well known in Lhasa that [Lungshar](#) had been arrested and [Trimön](#) had fled to Drepung. I heard that on that evening all the members of Lungshar's party held a big meeting down there carrying lamps. At that meeting, except for [Kapshöba](#), all the others were there. They said, "We shouldn't remain like this. We should go in teams of 2-3 people to Drepung and Sera so some lay officials and monk officials went to Drepung and some went to Sera. They [Sera] said, "This was done by the government. We met here for the people and you people have not been imprisoned. [Lungshar's arrest] probably is not because of holding the meetings. [Lungshar](#) was a big [using English] political figure [tib. mi], so there might be some other reasons."

Q

Who said this?

A

Sera said this when those people came to Sera. And the abbot and the monastic officials in Drepung told them [Lungshar's people], "You are extraordinarily bad! (tib. [gang](#) mintse re [gang mi tshad red). You have caused such a chaotic situation (tib, sa ngi sing ngi [zang ngi zing ngi]). Dewashung [the government] has arrested a Dewashung Kudrak. We, the great monastic seat (tib. [trasa](#) [grwa sa] are doing religious practices, not doing those things. If you still cause disturbances, we will arrest you and hand you over to Dewashung." Therefore, the ones who went to Drepung had to run away fast because they were in danger of getting arrested by the monks.

At that time, regarding the monks called "representatives," when they were called to the Tsondu in Lhasa, they were famous and they joined with [Lungshar](#). They were powerful, but they didn't have much effect at the meeting in the monastery when they were left as individuals, because they were usually doing trade and those kinds of things. Then the abbot also said, "This is not good. We are not allowed to say anything about whatever Dewashung does." So they [Lungshar's people] weren't able to do anything.

When the Silön and the Kashag send spies to find out who went to Drepung and who went to Sera, they heard all about this on the second day. So on the third day, the Kashag called the Trungtsi and there were quite a lot of Kudrak. They divided them up and sent them to arrest all of those people [who went to Sendre]. Their houses were sealed. The Kashag told them [the Trungtsi and Kudrak], "You must demote all the ringleaders who

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went to Drepung and Sera in their own houses. So after sealing their houses, take soldiers and arrest them and shut them in prison."

One [Trunyichemmo](#), one Tsipön and 2-3 Kudrak were sent as teams. Yuthok [Sawang](#) was sent to Janglocen [tib. lchang lo can] who was his friend in the past, although they didn't get along well regarding [using English] politics. Yuthok told me that he was very embarrassed and when they went there, Janglocen Gung was coming down and went through the motions of saying, "Oh! You Kungös. Please come in." [tib. o sku ngo [tsho](#) yar chib sgyur gnang dgos]. When he told Janglocen, "Kungö, it is too bad and we are very embarrassed, but this is a government order, so we have no choice about doing it. We are here regarding the meeting." Then Janglocen went through the motions of saying, "Oh, it doesn't matter, of course it should be like this" [tib. ga ga'i byed kyi ma red/ 'di [tsho](#) yin dang yin]. Then the Kudraks said, "Untie his head knot" [tib. spa lcog dkrol]." Quite a lot of them were placed in the prison in Lhasa called Lhogyü [tib. lho rgyud] [which was in the Jokhang] where they incarcerated [using English] political prisoners. Some lay officials and monk officials were shut up in [Tse](#) where [Lungshar](#) was. Altogether, about 8 of them were locked up. Among them there was Garjang Tempa La [tib. mgar byang bstan pa lags], Gyankhar Nangpa [tib. rgyal mkhar nang pa], Menriba [tib. sman ri ba], and Dragtön [tib. brag thon] who was an important person with [Lungshar](#) who had gone to escort [Künphel](#) La to Kongpo. There was also a monk official nicknamed "Nepalese" [tib. bal po] who was rich, a monk official nicknamed "Kongpo youth," [tib. kong phrug], and Janglocen Gung Kushog. These 8 people were imprisoned.

Lungshar was arrested on the 22nd of the 3rd lunar month and those people were arrested on the 24th or 25th. If they had stayed still, they would not have had arrested. On that day, people in Lhasa went to watch the spectacle (tib. temo ta [ltad mo lta]) making the sound woo woo, and saying who will be next to be get his house sealed. When one person was arrested and had his house sealed, people would go to the next one. There was a lay official called Karchungnga [tib. dkar byung ba] who later became a Depön when the communists came. I heard that the people were staying outside his house saying now they are going to arrest Karchungnga because he was also a [Lungshar] Party member. Karchungnga himself told me, "I thought that they will definitely seal my house and I was waiting until it became dark, but they didn't seal my house"

Kungö Gadrang [tib. dga' brang], the [Jigyab khempo](#) who is in Dharamsala, also told me that he went to another person's house where he heard that they were all getting arrested, so he thought that he will be also arrested. If he stayed outside, they won't find him and

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it will be troublesome [tib. ca zing po], so it will be better to stay home so he went back home. He thought it doesn't matter to be arrested, but they didn't arrest him. The majority [of members] were not arrested. If they had to arrest all of them, there will be many people. One bad thing that happened was that Commander-in-Chief [Tempa Jayang](#), who was famous and was among the main persons in Lungshar's party, in one day he changed sides (tib. chinang log]. Although I didn't know for sure, probably just one or two days before [Lungshar](#) was arrested, he, being the Commander-in-Chief and being close to the [Kalön](#) Lama Chöthar La, so one day the [Kalön](#) Lama Chöthar La whispered in his ears, "You should not do this. You should come over on this path. In the future, we have great hope for you." So [Tempa Jayang](#) might have told him, "So now I am going to leave their work." So [Tempa Jayang](#) became the [using English] favorite of the government on this side and left the other side and didn't have [using English] sympathy for [Lungshar](#). Then [Tempa Jayang](#) became the favorite and became a [Trunyichemmo](#) for 1-2 years and soon after, when the [Kalön](#) Lama died, he became the [Kalön](#) Lama. When I was a [Kalön](#), he was the [Kalön](#) lama for little more than a year. He was a nice person and was very famous.

Q

At first, he was with [Lungshar](#), right?

A

At first, all people were saying, "Tempa Jayang is a knowledgeable person and he was close with the Regent Reting [like [a member] of the same family. So everyone had hopes with him. However, the reason why [Tempa Jayang](#) went with [Lungshar](#) was because [Lungshar](#) didn't like [Künphel](#) La. When [Tempa Jayang](#) was a Kudrak in the past, [Künphel](#) La confiscated all of his wealth. When [Künphel](#) La was there, he [Tempa jayang] was working under him as the [Tseja](#) which is a high rank of the 4th rank. One day, when he was eating his food, a person came in and said, "Künphel la is calling you right now". He said, "I am having my food. I should have the time to eat my food" Those bad people told [Künphel](#) La about his. At that time, [Künphel](#) La was doing some construction work in the Potala and [Tempa Jayang](#) was working on that. He was among the bigger Kudrak in there, like the 1st or the 2nd.

Later, the when a house in the Potala was not built well and became kind of crooked, the Dalai Lama got agitated and told them to demolish the house on which many millions had

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been wasted and had caused a lot of hardship for the [miser](#), so heads of the construction work were imprisoned and all of their wealth was confiscated. The main person in charge was the [Kalön](#) Lama Parkhang [tib. par khang]. He was sent into [using English] exile and all of his wealth was confiscated. He was the one in the Parju Ngadün [tib. par bcu nga bdun] [he is referring to the poem by Skyid zur lags on bribing the three [Kalön](#) to get appointed as the head of Rimpung [tib. rin spungs] Dzong.

Many of the Kudrak with same rank didn't get their wealth confiscated, for example, [Lukhangwa](#) and Langdön [tib. glang mdun]. But [Tempa Jayang](#) was treated specially and all of his wealth was confiscated and he was demoted to the rank of an ordinary monk official. So he had disliked [Künphel](#) La. [Lungshar](#) was picking up people who had hatred for [Künphel](#) La.

So [Tempa Jayang](#) was glad when [Künphel](#) La was taught a lesson and therefore stood on Lungshar's side. Later, when the [using English] party who taught [Künphel](#) La a lesson became better and were doing the new things, all the representatives of [Sendregasum](#) were following them until [Lungshar](#) was arrested. They were powerful and all people were afraid of them.

When the Kashag arrested [Lungshar](#), the Tsondu Assembly was not held because they didn't have to since the soldiers were in their hands. When they didn't hold the Tsondu, there was nothing to do. No one could say that I am going to hold a meeting.

Right after the Kudrak were arrested, they [the government] sent letters to Sera and Drepung and told Drepung that they had to hand over Sog Jiso. It was not good for the government to send people to Drepung to arrest him because the monks will fight. Even it is only one person, it was not okay for their [Drepung's] name or [using English] fame. And they did the same in Sera, telling them that they have to hand over Chamön. So the monks discussed this and said, "Arresting Kudraks is their business, but it is not at all okay to arrest people in the monastery. If we hand him over, it would be very shameful, so we can't hand him over."

The government knew that they will not hand over those people, but this was just to give a [using English] warning telling them that Sog Jiso and Chamön were Lungshar's friend. When this was told, they [Sendre] became kind of subdued (tib. shom [gzhom]) because they didn't have the idea to many things. And they didn't hand them over.

Q

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At that time, what did you think? If [Lungshar](#) could have gotten through [escape] this [tib. thar], would the monasteries have supported him?

A

No, they would not have. What [Lungshar](#) hoped was that he didn't need the monasteries to support him openly (tib. ngösu [dngos su]). He wanted to give the impression that he was supported by the monasteries and he wanted to take the power by himself and then give alms to the monasteries and treat them well and then he hoped to suppress everyone (tib. [gang](#) ga nan [sgang ga mnan]). But he knew that when something happened, the monasteries would not support him because [Lungshar](#) thought the Regent and those people would not dare to do those things [arrest him]. He never thought that he would be arrested. So he gave the impression that he had many people [supporting him] in the monastery and thought that the Kudraks will be scared of him [because of this].

At that time, the Regent and those people did something brave. All of this [using English] political plan was made by [Trimön](#). He said that it is not good for me to stay here. If I go to Drepung, [they] will have [using English] sympathy for us and everyone will be angry with [Lungshar](#) and will say that he is even going to kill a [Shape](#). So that is why he [Trimön] ran away. It was for making [using English] propaganda. Probably this plan was made by [Trimön](#) and then they dared to do that. It was good that they did that, because it made the country have tranquility [tib. lhing lhing].

But at that time, [Trimön](#) called the Kudrak who were [using English] neutral to his house, telling them to come to his place for a few moments, [tib. nga'i rtsar khyug tsam shog a]. He called many people like this. and I was also called. When I was called I was a young Senampa offcoast. Phala [tib. pha lha] Drönyerchemmo was then a [Tsendrön](#). When I went in [to Trimön's house], Phala was coming out and I met him on the way and I said to him, "I was called, so I am going in." Phala told me that he had already been there.

At that time, he [Trimön] was brainwashing us (tib. lepa lug [klad pa blug]) because he didn't regard Phala and me as people having [using English] political power and he didn't trust us because we were like children. But in Tibet, the big households were important (tib. nengag [gnad 'gag]) because if you say like Surkhang, there were many people who have [using English] sympathy for us and we have relatives where we had married off sons and daughters. Similarly, in Drepung, we had Khamtsen like Guge [tib. gu ge] and Pethu [tib. dpe thub], and in Sera we had Tsha [tib. tsha ba] [Khamtsen]. These Khamtsen will say that they will do everything that we tell them to do. We [Surkhang and

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the Khamtsen] were like one household. When he need some monks, if we tell them to send some monks, they will call us honorific household (simshag [tib. gzim shag]) and they will do that. Therefore, the big households in Tibet were very important. When you [using English] vote, you have to go to each person, but in Tibet, if one could buy a person from the big households, it was okay even if he is a 5-6 years old child. Under this, several thousands of people were connected together. Therefore, this was Trimön's [using English] strategy to make himself stable (tib. tempo [brtan po]). He was calling us in order to tell us, "I trust you. I know you are not in Lungshar's [party]." He called us for this purpose, because if we were scared [of him], it is possible that we might go to Lungshar's side. So [Trimön](#) was telling people, "You are white (tib. garpo [dkar po]) [innocent] and now you are doing good so you should stay quiet and stable. You don't need to go to both sides, [using English] right and left." [Trimön](#) also told me, "I am glad that now you are doing good. You are a big household, so you should stay still and stable. As for me, I am old and going to die soon." He told all the people this pleasant sounding thing (tib. kecha nyenpo [skad cha snyan po] which made people feel sad. Then [Lungshar](#) was arrested and then they held a Tsondu for punishing [Lungshar](#).

Q

Was that a Tsondu Gyendzom?

A

No. It was a Tsondu Hragdu (Abbreviated Assembly). I was there in this Tsondu.

Q

From the monasteries, were the abbots and the ex-abbots (the khensur [tib. mkhan zur]) there?

A

There were a several current abbots, but no ex-abbots. There were only 4 abbots from Drepung and 2 abbots from Sera.

Q

They were only the abbots who headed Colleges [tib. [tratsang](#) [grwa tshang]], right?

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A

Yes. It was a special Tsondu where the Kudrak were nominated and called to the Tsondu. It was already kind finished (tib. tsangma sö [gtsang ma bzos]). At this Tsondu, the representatives of [Sendregasum](#) didn't come at all because they were not called. Furthermore, the monasteries were told to hand over the new representatives [from Lungshar's party such as Sog Jiso, etc]. So they [the representatives of Sendregasum] didn't dare to come. This Tsondu was held in [Tse](#). It discussed what would be better to do regarding [Lungshar](#).

Q

On what date did they hold this [tsondu](#)?

A

After just 2-3 days of discussing what would be better, the Tsondu said that we need to appoint an investigator (tib. shibjöpa [zhib dpyod pa]) to [using English] do research on the [Lungshar](#) matter. The Tsondu told the Kashag to discuss this with the Regent and appoint the people. Then the Tsondu was adjourned. After 2-3 hours, there was nothing and all people had already become gentle (tib. jampo ['jam po]).

Q

How many people were there in the Tsondu?

A

There were only about 40-50 people, including the Kudrak. Of these, there were not many who talked because all had become calm [tib. lhing po]. As soon as the Tsondu said this, the Regent and the Kashag discussed this and appointed 4 investigators: the first was [Trunyichemmo](#) Dombor [tib. gdong por]. He was a real enemy of [Lungshar](#). The second was [Tempa Jayang](#) who was the Commander-in-Chief then. The next was the Gusung Depön (Bodyguard Regiment Commander) Jangra [tib. lcang ra]. He was related to [Bönshö](#) who was a close friend of [Künphel](#) la. The fourth was [Lukhangwa](#).

Q

What position was [Lukhangwa](#)?

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A

He was 5th rank and was in charge of offerings and supplies in the Lhasa Nyertsang [tib. gnyer tshang]. They [the committee] was told to investigate what illegal things [Lungshar](#) and his followers had done. Then [Tempa Jayang](#) asked for leave (from the job) saying, "You three Sirs definitely can do this. I can not be an investigator of this because I was involved in this. He was [using English] sure and he said that was to keep himself clean. He said, "I don't know what bad things [Lungshar](#) did. In the talk regarding reforming Tibet which people know, there were many people and I was also in this. So if we have to investigate this matter, it will not sound good [tib. len po yod ma red] when people look at it". He was saying this officially.

When he said that, the Kashag and the Tsipön told him, "You don't have any fault. This is not the matter of reform. The person called [Lungshar](#) was instigating (tib. trug [dkrug]) the country and doing the communist system (tib. marpö lelug [gung](#) tren [tib. dmar po'i las lugs [gung](#) phran]).

Q

At that time, were you using the word "gungtren"?

A

Yes. They were using the terms gungtren and marpö lelug because there were communists in Yanan in China long before that --from 1928. For example, when the 13th Dalai Lama died, in his last will he wrote that the "communist system will flourish" [tib. dmar po'i las lugs cher cher dar bas]. In Tibet, they used the word marpo (red) for communists because they knew clearly that the communist Russians had arrived in Dakhurel [Ulan Batar] and there were many Mongolian monks in Sendre who talked about that. So everyone knew that the communists were bad. They [Kashag] told [Tempa Jayang](#), "It doesn't matter that you were involved in the reforms, you must do the investigation, so then he became clear [of conflict of interest].

Tempa Jayang was the Commander-in-Chief and was capable and famous so many people went there [to Lungshar's party] because [Tempa Jayang](#) and his friends were there. When they heard [Tempa Jayang](#) was there, many followed him. It is like if Robert Kennedy said something, then people will think there will no problem if we follow him. [Lungshar](#) was knowledgeable, but [Tempa Jayang](#) in an instant turned the screw (tib.

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khyug tsam zhig la gcus phur zhig brgyab] and turned his [using English] arrow to the other side.

I heard from other people that [Tempa Jayang](#) didn't talk much, but it was okay for him because he didn't have any danger and he probably didn't care what happened to his friends [who were in the party]. So his friends, poor things! Then they interrogated [Lungshar](#) and told him, "You made a sorcery curse against [Sawang](#) Trimön." Tibetans regard casting spells as bad as poisoning and murdering someone, so they asked him who his partners were.

Q

What did [Lungshar](#) say?

A

Lungshar told a lie and said, "I didn't do a sorcery curse. People just lied and made that letter/note.

Q

It is strange that [Lungshar](#) made a sorcery curse because he knew about the outside world?

A

He knew the outside world's customs, but also believed strongly in sorcery curses, tantra and doing the divination by looking into a mirror (tib. tra phab [pra phab]). He was strange and his sect was the Nyingma [tib. rnying ma]. He met many lamas and was kind of strange and knowledgeable. When he was young, he was skillful in Tibetan medicine and his writing was good. He was also eloquent and he was good in being deceitful (tib. yo khepo [g.yo mkhas po]) for example, he would drink [chang](#) (beer) with his friends even if he didn't want to.

Once Yuthok gave a big party where [Lungshar](#) came and drank [chang](#) and played music. He was skillful in all the music instruments like the lute (tib. [dramnyen](#) [tib. sgra snyan]), the hoching and the dulcimer. At that time, the Dalai Lama [using English] punished Silön's Nendrön saying that it is not okay for the Silön to join the party because the Silön is a high ranking, and it is not okay for him to drink [chang](#) with [Lungshar](#). [laughter] The Nendrön was a nice person and he was not at the party, but he was punished saying you didn't tell

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the Silön [to behave well]. This was worse than whipping the Silön because it was well known. At that time, in the party, [Lungshar](#) was the main person. [Lungshar](#) was a very strange person who could do that kind of things to all people.

At that time, there was nobody from the [Sendregasum](#), so [Lungshar](#) didn't have anything to do and all the main people among the Kudrak were arrested. And the remaining Kudrak sent people to [Trimön](#) and told him, "I didn't do that by myself, [Lungshar](#) brought me there." [tib. nga khrid byung]. The majority were [using English] neutral and were wondering what would happen. Everyone was scared of being arrested.

Then they investigated for several days and there was no danger at all, but at that time, we had to hurry up on Lungshar's matters because a high Chinese high official called Huang Musung was coming from China via Kham to make an offering for the deceased Dalai Lama (tib. gongsog бүкхен [dgongs tshogs 'bul mkhan]). And before that, a Chinese called Zhang Cainyi and a wireless operator were coming via India and had arrived at Gyantse. Probably, that was on the 1-2nd day of the 4th lunar month. We heard that he arrived at Gyantse and he will arrive in Lhasa in about 7 days riding. So we thought that since they have a wireless set, the Chinese government may tell us not to make the decision on [Lungshar](#) right away.

At that time, the Chinese Government needed two sides in Tibet. They wanted to help one side and put down the other side. They didn't like to have only one person in Tibet. According to their [using English] policy, they needed to have 2-3-4 people. It was so nice when they saw that there was one [using English] party, because they can make friends with them, Also, they [Chinese] might help [Lungshar](#) and if they say, "Please don't punish him for the time being." Then the order from the Chinese government will cancel it [the punishment] [tib. lung shar la khirms a le ma gcod rogs gnang lab na/ rgya nag gzhung gi bka' des med pa 'gro gi red]. So they said that we should settle the [Lungshar](#) case before they [Huang Musung and his delegation] come.

After this, the 4 investigators discussed the case in a hurried manner and made a plan and submitted it to the Kashag. I haven't forgotten this at all. We held a Tsondu on the 6th of the 4th lunar month and put forward the plan to the Tsondu. The [Trunyichemmo](#) read that plan which said that they did this and that. And then the plan said, "We are going to punish the 8 ordinary Kudraks later on, and the important thing is that [Lungshar](#) is very callous. So if we leave him like this and if he could flee, it is very dangerous. Therefore, he should be sentenced to capital punishment, but since the Dalai Lama passed away recently, it is slightly not okay to kill him, so we will gouge out both of his eyeballs and

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sentence him to life imprisonment in [Shöl](#)." [tib. sku drag byings kyi nyes pa mjug la gtong gi yin/ gal che ba la lung shar 'di [gang](#) min tshad rdzab can red/ 'di 'di 'dra se bzhas nas shor na nyen kha chen po red/ yin tsang kho la srog gi thog gi nyes pa gtong dgos yag 'dug/ yin na'i da res rgyal ba rin po che gshegs grabs yin tsang/ gsod yag 'di tog tsam 'grig gi ma red/ de 'dra yin tsang kho'i mig gnyis po 'di bton gyi yin/ tshe gcig zhol la btson la bcug gi yin"]. This was made by the 4 investigators.

Q

What reason did they cite in the plan?

A

They wrote, "Lungshar gathered many people and planned to demolish the old Ganden Phodrang government. This is a people's (miser's) rebellion. In the past, when [Lungshar](#) had power, he didn't do his work fairly and he instigated between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama" [tib. lung shar gyis mi mang po rug rug bzos nas/ gzhung dga' ldan pho brang rnying pa 'di med pa bzo yag gi 'char gzhi byas yod red/ 'di mi ser ngo log red/ lung shar kho ra dbang yod dus las ka drang po byas yod ma red/ rgyal ba [yab](#) sras gnyis kyi bar dbyen dkrug pa red]. It is true that he didn't do his work fairly.

Q

What other crimes did they write?

A

The main one was that he had rebelled and demolished the government.

Q

Did they write about making the sorcery curse?

A

They also wrote that the letter was investigated for whether it was a sorcery curse and it was casting a spell [tib. drag po mngon spyod] which is like [using English] murder.

Q

Didn't they write about demoting [Trimön](#)?

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A

They got the letter regarding this, but they didn't mention it because it involved the fighting between the [Kalön](#) Lama and [Trimön](#) when both of them had power. So they might have said that this is a small matter, so just leave it. If they mentioned that, all people will know that the two of them fought and some people might think that because they fought, the Dalai Lama was very angry which caused his death. At that time, there was talk that the Dalai Lama died from anger. So they didn't mention about the two of them [the [Kalön](#) Lama and Trimön]. At that time, they knew about that and they had the [samtra](#) message board with this.

Q

What was the reason for not mentioning about the two of them?

A

It was because everyone didn't know how they fought in the Kashag. So it was good not to have their names mentioned, so they hid it [the [samtra](#) letter]. The Kudrak knew about that, but the people in the countryside didn't know about that.

It was written in the plan that [Lungshar](#) rebelled and did the sorcery curse and instigated trouble between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama so his eyes will be gouged out. Consequently, everyone in the Tsondu was astonished and remained silent for awhile, but nobody said, "Do not gouge out his eyes." Who would say that? [tib. sus lab kyi red] There would be nobody who would dare to say that. So all said, "It is as you said" [tib. da ga rang] and drank tea and stayed silent for a long time just chit chatting (tib. jolo molo [co lo mo lo]) and whispering to each other. I also thought, I wish they would not gouge out his eyes and many people might have thought the same. Shasur [tib. bshad zur] was sitting next to me.

Then they asked, "Isn't this plan good? Isn't this correct?" [tib. 'char gzhi 'di yag po byung mi 'dug gas/ da ga ma red pas]. People responded saying, "Yes. It is as you said." [tib. lo / da ga rang]. Then the Tsondu said, "We don't know much. So you superiors, you the lama and lords, please do whatever you need to do. Whatever you do, we will abide by it. We will not tell you to do this and do not do that." The Tsondu didn't say, "Gouge them out! but rather said, "You do whatever you want to do." [tib. ga re yin na'i khyed rang tshos byed].

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Q

In the Tsondu, did the Trungtsigye say that?

A

The Trungtsigye would not say that because they were like a messenger, telling things up and passing things down [tib. yar lab mar lab]. When they asked, "Isn't this right?" Some said, "You the lama and lords, please do whatever you need to do. The Tsondu had a square seal and [Sendregasum](#) had three seals and these were needed for decisions. Then the [Trunyichemmo](#) and the Tspön would write a note saying, "We all heard well and understood the contents of the plan, so in the future, do whatever you want to and we will not tell you that whatever you did is not okay. We are all the same on this matter." And then they read it and asked, "is this right? And all said, "it is right. It is well done!" And then they put the seals on it. And then it was finished and it was [using English] a success.

Then they took the plan and submitted it to the regent and those people. This Tsondu took a long time dilly dallying [tib. nya re nyo re] and by then it was almost sunset.

Q

Why?

A

At that time, one didn't say clearly that Lungshar's punishment was well done. They were still hesitating and wondering what would happen, and they were little bit scared. The Tibetan people have a great sense of compassion, so even though they were very angry with [Lungshar](#), everyone was very scared when they heard about gouging out his eyeballs. From the religious point of view, they didn't say that this [punishment] is right. If they [the Tsondu members] didn't say that, and if the Trungtsi kind of forced them to do that, then it will become terrible (tib. pe söpa re [dpe bzos pa red] because we didn't have that custom. The Trungtsi would never say something like, "This is well done. Wouldn't it be good to say we agree with this [punishment]? [tib. 'di yag po byung/ dag a rang yin zer na yag po ma red pas]. They were just waiting and not being hurried. Then when they asked, "How about the discussion?", they said "yes," Like this it took a long time. When I looked at it, all the people wanted to make [Lungshar](#) powerless so that he could not stand up again in the

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future, but they didn't want [Lungshar](#) to have his eyes gouged out. They didn't want that at all.

Q

Did they make teams (sub-groups) in that Tsondu?

A

Yes. The Kashag nominated the Tsondu members. No one said that the Senampa [themnselves] should discuss and send a representative.

Q

No, I mean did they divide the Tsondu members into teams?

A

They didn't. They didn't need to do that because there was no trouble in the Tsondu. There was Phala [Tsendrön](#), so I think probably the Tsondu members were those people to whom [Trimön](#) had talked. Those were the big households who had big estates. In Tibet, the ones who had big estates had problems, but on the other hand they were good for the government because they would never cause big disturbances. They were kind of calm. The reason why the old government lasted so long was because their partners [tib. rogs pa] were made to be like small governments and they joined hands with each other so all could survive. When one of them fell, they would help him to stand up. Like this, the government remained (albeit) like staggering [tib. khya re khyo re].

Similarly, the so called Labrang were also needed, because if 1-2 Labrang disappeared it would not be alright. So in those early days, they were all helping each other. Even if the other Labrang is their enemy, they would help him because they would think that next year our Labrang might fall. That's how the Kudrak never get lost [eliminated]. Even when someone was demoted, they would make a new one to stand up. So all the Kudrak from the early times were all there.

So it was decided to have Lungshar's eyeballs gouged out and then they showed the plan to the Kashag saying this is the Tsondu's plan. The Kashag was very glad.

Q

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At that time, the Regent and those people had the power, so what was the reason for calling the Tsondu?

A

There was no problem with calling the Tsondu because the members were selected by themselves [the top leaders], and they wanted to use the Tsondu's seal. They called the Tsondu because Lungshar's affair was a big matter. So in the future, if people said that it was bad to gouge out Lungshar's eyeballs, they can say, "This was not done by 1 or 2 people. This work was discussed and done by the Tsondu." And they could even say, "We didn't know about that. We are not to be blamed because we were in danger. They would not talk about an abbreviated Tsondu and they just said the Tsondu did that. It was to place the blame [on the tsondu].

Q

What was the origin of the Tsondu [Assembly]? Was it made by the Chinese Emperor?

A

There was no [tsondu](#) in the very early times. I think the Tsondu was not made by the Chinese Emperor and that it was first held during the time of Pholhane. At the time of Pholhane, the Chinese had left 10,000 soldiers in Tibet, so Pholhane said that the number of soldiers should be reduced, but if Pholhane told Chinese Emperor to reduce the soldiers, the Chinese Emperor will be agitated with Pholhane. Therefore, Pholhane told the monks in the monasteries and the Kudrak and they gathered together in front of Pholhane and they said that it is difficult to have so many soldiers [in Tibet]. And then the Pholhane told the Chinese officials [tib. rgya mi'i dpon po] that "The people and the Kudrak are not listening to me [and are saying they want to reduce the number of soldiers]." and then they all went together to the Chinese officials. At that time there was a Tsondu and it was just called Tsondu.

Then the Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso [tib. skal bzang rgya mtsho] said that he wanted to meet the Chinese Emperor, so Pholhane called many old Kudrak and the abbots and held a Tsondu and they went to the Amban and Pholhane didn't make the report, but he let the others report. This was the first Tsondu. Since then when there were some matters that caused difficulties for the government, they held the Tsondu which became more powerful.

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Q

Sometimes, when the subordinates (tib. wog ['og]) wanted to make a new custom, they would hold the Tsondu, right?

A

Yes. In the beginning, the Tsondu was made to help the government from behind, but after a long time, the Tsondu had the real power. This happened many times in history. For example, the first Reting regent was overthrown (tib. yug [dbyugs]) by the Tsondu. So the Tsondu overthrew many people.

Q

The Tsondu could not overthrow the Dalai Lama, right?

A

Yes. They could never do that because of religion. It never happened in our history.

Q

It was said that the 13th Dalai Lama was killed, is that true?

A

No. The 13th was not killed. When the 12th Dalai Lama died, it was said that he died after the [Tseja](#) official served him a yogurt. The [Tseja](#) was very friendly with the Dalai Lama and the Dalai Lama would go to his home in [Tse](#). So later, they put a cangue on him and did a lot of things to him, but the Dalai Lama was not killed because of [using English] politics. The Tibetan people were saying that the Regents killed the Dalai Lamas because when the Dalai Lama became 20 years old, the regent's power would be lost. But I don't think so.

Q

Wasn't the age limit 18?

A

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It was 20, but the 13th took the power at age 18. This age limit was made during the time of the Emperor Khangxi.